

Friis, John

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From: anastasia.brewczynski@huskymail.uconn.edu  
Sent: Friday, March 13, 2009 5:01 PM  
To: Friis, John; eca\_pace@yahoo.com

I am a Junior at the University of Connecticut as a BFA Acting student. I attended the Educational Center for the Arts Theatre Department from 2002-2006. I hope this letter can give you some understanding about the importance of ECA in my life, and the lives of other students like me.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

There is nothing normal about ECA. Once the bus drops you off in the streets of New Haven, students are not policed by bells or yelled at by security guards to get to class. You are free to go, or stay, as you choose. This is because ECA is a place students choose to be. For so many of us, art is not a one-semester requirement, or an extracurricular after school. It is as fundamental to our education as any academic subject. We need ECA because it gives us artistic resources that public, and even most private schools, don't offer. Students have a chance to invest creatively, and challenge themselves as they do in any academic course. ECA gives students a community of peers and advisors in which to take risks, challenge and develop ideas.

The knowledge and skills I acquired at ECA not only got me into UConn's competitive Acting program, but continue to serve me there. At ECA I was not only involved in shows themselves, but invested in the work of stage craft as a complete art. Because of ECA, I came into the UConn Acting program having a much more solid background in theatre history, dramaturgy, and acting technique than most of my classmates got from their high school theatre programs. What's more, I understood the commitment and passion required to make a person want to work hard for art. At UConn, I am in classes and rehearsals from 9am-11pm, and then home to do homework and learn lines. ECA allows students to experience, on a high school level, what a commitment to art is, and with that, make an educated decision about how they want art to be a part of their lives.

ECA is a community of weirdos. Passionate, creative, angry, excited, teenage weirdos. At ECA it is cool to wear goggles, all the time, to scat in the hallway, to recite lines, or write poetry in the bows of a tree, and to actually take it seriously when you are sixteen-years-old and drawing a naked person in school. Not only are these things not possible in most schools, but the community we form at ECA becomes the friends we never lose touch with, and the artists we will continue to work with for years to come.

It is not just the student body that makes up this lasting community. The ECA faculty was not only an important part of my high school career, but they have continued to be a support system for me throughout the years. I have worked numerous Summers during and after high school with Ingrid Schaeffer and Joan McAfee, and used them as references to get many other jobs. I keep in contact with them, and many other former teachers through emails and visits. Any time I am in town, Peter Loffredo makes a point to invite me to talk to his students, or have coffee with me to talk about what I'm doing. He also sends audition notices, and play fliers to former students, keeping us informed on opportunities and connections in the area.

What's more is that I am not the only student treated like this. The people at ECA, from the office staff, who all knew my name my very first day, to the teachers, who became my role-models, bosses, co-artists, and personal mentors as well, support and encourage both students who wish to explore the arts for pleasure, and those who wish to build a life dedicated to art.

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**Friis, John**

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**From:** Julianne D'Iorio [radiance1005@gmail.com]

**Sent:** Friday, March 13, 2009 1:28 PM

**To:** Friis, John

**Subject:** teacher certification

Hello!

It has come to my attention that there is a possibility that all teaching artists at ECA would have to be certified teachers. I am a graduate of ECA, 2004, dance department. I believe that requiring these valuable artists to be certified teachers would be detrimental to the education of the students at ECA. I had a most amazing experience and education at ECA and it is because the educators are artists, first and foremost. Their artistic insight and experience is what makes an education at ECA fulfilling and valuable. Their individual career paths may not have led them to a teaching certification but that does not discount the value of their knowledge. Please consider this when making such an important decision.

Thank you for your time and consideration!

-Julianne D'Iorio

2004 dance department graduate

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